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Annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women

Statement submitted by Equidad de Genero: Ciudadania, Trabajo y Familia, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2010/100.

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Statement

Gender mainstreaming as a strategy of actions

It is a challenge to achieve the international goals and commitments in the area of gender equality and to assess the state of implementation of the gender-related goals and the United Nations development agenda. Meeting this challenge would require moving from intentions to actions and achieving gender equality in budgets and programmes.

Gender mainstreaming is a formal strategy of institutional engineering designed to optimize actions and budgets in order to address structural inequalities suffered by women, thus contributing to the direct achievement of Millennium Development Goals 3 (Promote gender equality and empower women) and 5 (Improve maternal health) and, in general, to the full achievement of the rest of the Goals.

Gender mainstreaming requires a methodological procedure of implementation to modify discrimination and formal and informal power structures within institutions and to transform the logic of planning and budgeting, so that public policies and programmes adhere to a gender perspective.

There are four conditions necessary to ensure progression and sustainability in the process of gender mainstreaming at the institutional level: (a) modification of all normative documents in the spirit of the harmonization of international and national instruments for gender equality; (b) development of a gender mechanism (a gender unit or department) to ensure equality between women and men within the structure of the institution; (c) planning and budgeting with a gender perspective in both internal and external policies to address the different needs and interests of women and men; (d) integration of a gender perspective in the specific procedures of each institutional area in order to unify the goal of the mission and the vision of the institution. These four conditions complement each other, and although their implementation must be acknowledged as a long-term process, it will gradually lead to structural change. This methodological approach allows for the development of a system of monitoring and evaluation and strengthens transparency and accountability at all levels.

Gender planning and budgeting within the gender mainstreaming strategy promotes the modification of individual programmes until a gender perspective is fully integrated throughout the programmatic structure, both in internal (including normative harmonization and policies addressing discrimination against women, for example, so-called glass ceilings) and external policies. This methodological approach uses a systematic scheme to fulfil the goals and commitments of gender equality. It also helps to assess the degree of implementation, the quality of the actions and the budgetary amounts allocated to women's advancement.

The commitment of Governments to implement a gender mainstreaming strategy in every public institution would be a clear statement of their interest in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Since all of the Goals are interrelated, it is necessary to implement a holistic intervention in order to achieve them. The way to do this is through the integration of a gender perspective throughout the governmental structure.